

There have been many comments made that we somehow do not treat this urgent matter with the due diligence that it deserves; and I want to underscore, as chairman of the Travel and Tourism Caucus, the co-chairman along with the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR), that we take this very seriously; and I want to also underscore as a Floridian, tourism is our number one enterprise in our State.

It seems like we are all bickering over a potential whether we should hire 28,000-some workers and whether those workers be part of the Federal system. Let me suggest to my colleagues that under the Republican version of the bill that is languishing in the other body for failure to compromise on some other positions, we suggest that we could do a blending at the discretion of the President and the Transportation Secretary, former Democratic Chairman Norman Mineta, that we look to see what is most appropriate for securing the terminals at our airports throughout our Nation.

Let me ask anybody who has owned a business or hired people before how long it takes to do background and training to get a workforce ready. Multiply that by 28,000 individuals, and my colleagues will see the complexity of the problem. It may not be a big problem for LaGuardia or JFK or Washington Reagan National or John Wayne and some of the larger airports in our country; but think of some of the smaller regional and rural airports where we must man that same security checkpoint.

Every Republican supports strict Federal rules and regulations. Every Republican is not satisfied with the status quo. Those that have accused us of somehow trying to be supportive of the current contract holders of this service are absolutely unequivocally wrong. In my case in Palm Beach County, I would love for the President of the United States and Mr. Mineta to contract with the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Department professional law enforcement officers, members of the Police Benevolent Association Union or Fraternal Order of Police Union, allow them to be contracted with to be on-site security screeners for our airports.

We can do that in a matter of 72 hours, deploying those people to that important checkpoint. That is what the flexibility provides the President the right to do; but under their version, it cannot be done that way.

We may hire 28,000 people ultimately, who knows. We will continue to negotiate and try and prevail in the opinion which we believe is the correct one, that we have a blending of responsibilities; but if we do not secure the entirety of the airport system, including those who work at the ramps, those who load the luggage, those who bring in the food carts, or those who clean the planes, we will have left a gaping hole in the security of our airplanes and our airports.

I applaud everyone in this Chamber who has worked hard on trying to get an aviation safety bill passed. I regret some are using false rhetoric in describing our leadership and others as not caring about public safety. I take umbrage and challenge those types of statements because they are absolutely, factually incorrect. We want safety. We want security. We prioritized these issues. We will not back away from these issues; but when my colleagues use one little political call that by hiring these 28,000 we have ensured some degree of safety, we are misleading people because it will take far too long, potentially 3 to 5 years, to even get this workforce up and running, and that in fact does not bring security to date. Our bill does.

I urge the other body to act. I urge them to compromise. I look forward to a bill for the President to sign and returning safety to our skies.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Ms. MCKINNEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. MCKINNEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CONGRATULATIONS TO CYNTHIA PLASCENCIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

RESPONSE TO REPUBLICAN'S POSITION ON AIRLINE SECURITY

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I will respond to my colleague from the other side of the aisle. I am not here for that purpose, but just to say that it took 3 weeks to get a bill on the floor of the House, and we were in a parliamentary situation where we did not have any choice but to try to keep it out of conference committee. We lost and so it is still in conference committee. It is almost 2 weeks now since it went in there.

I do not necessarily think they all ought to be federalized either, but I think we should have moved on it a month ago, and we are not in charge. The Republicans are. And it took 3 weeks to get a bill on the floor of the House.

Let me get back to what I really wanted to talk about, Mr. Speaker.

This last week, last Monday on Veterans' Day, our holiday, I had a chance to go to one of our middle schools in my district, Burbank Middle School, and I rise to congratulate a young Burbank Middle School constituent, Cyn-

thia Plascencia, for winning the Burbank Middle School essay contest on why tobacco is not for her. This contest is sponsored by the Texas Department of Health; and it is called A Week Without Tobacco or, in Spanish, *Semana Sin Tobacco*. I would like to submit a copy of Cynthia's essay for the RECORD.

Cynthia's essay gets to the real reasons why she does not smoke and why she does not want to let anything come between her and her dreams. Cynthia is not swayed by statistics, but I think I need to mention just a few because they highlight just what we are up against.

TOBACCO: WHY IT'S NOT FOR ME

Tobacco. A pleasant get away for some people, a disgusting habit for others. Now most 13 year old nerds, ahem, I mean, kids would argue that tobacco is bad. I'm cool with that, but when they are asked why it's bad, some would probably respond, "Uh, I dunno. My dad told me it was." At least to me that isn't enough evidence to argue with. But I am not one of those kids who sit there and say, "Well, 14,000,000 people die every day of lung cancer. 7,000,000 die every hour. 100,000 die every minute." That may be more evidence, but statistics isn't going to stop a 14 year old from smoking a cigarette. There's more to it than that. Enter my mind, and learn about what goes on in a kid's head; what we think, what we know, what we are. After all, no one knows what a kid thinks, but a kid.

Maybe the main reason why I don't smoke is because of my family. Everyone thinks they should look out for number 1, but with me it's never been like that. My family has always been my main priority. I needed guidance, it came from my family. I needed family support, it came from my family. I needed money—Well you get the point. My family comes first, and I would never do anything that would disappoint them. By smoking I would make myself feel great for, what, 5 minutes. Then what? Mood swings, head aches, smelly breath, yellow teeth, asthma, and by the time you realize the mistake you've made, it's too late. You're at the end of your rope. And I think the biggest devastation for me is seeing my parents mourn the death of their daughter. It pains me to see my family suffer. And for what? A cigarette? It's not worth it.

My education. A biggie in my life. At times a burden, but it's all right. It's important that I finish my education and get a good career. You see, I come from a big family. I have about 19 cousins. All of my cousins that are older than me, and my brother, haven't succeeded in life. Either they don't have the economic support, or they just don't want to do anything with their lives. There's seven of them. What about the other 11? Who is going to be their role model? In the end I am the one they're going to look up to. And if tobacco ever got involved in my life, I don't think I would be able to carry out my purpose. No one in my family has graduated high school with honor. And I'm not going to let tobacco stop me from being the first.

Now, I see that I have to be my own person. I'm not my brother. I'm not my father. I am me. If I smoked, I would be less than what I am. And I've never demeaned myself for anyone, or for anything. So, I guess what I'm trying to prove is that tobacco is not going to stop me from the best. And I don't need statistics to tell me that.

□ 1445

Forty-seven million American adults are smokers. Ninety percent of them

started smoking before they were 18. Three thousand teenagers will become regular smokers each day. So when we finish this day, we can count 3,000 more young people that will become smokers. Already this year more than 1 million kids, a million children, have become smokers. Three hundred forty thousand of those kids will die as a result of becoming smokers.

Mr. Speaker, to look at these numbers, one would think we would never be able to win the battle against this dangerous and deadly habit. But I believe that Cynthia Plascencia and her friends are smarter than that. They know smoking not only causes them to have bad breath, stained teeth, and smelly clothes, they know it interferes with them achieving their dreams. They know they will not be able to reach for the stars if they have to be hooked up to a respirator. They know that cancer, heart disease, stroke and asthma will not help them reach their goals. They know they will never meet their athletic goals if they cannot catch their breath. And they know they will not do well in school if they cannot concentrate.

After reading Cynthia's essay, I believe that teenagers today, when armed with the right information, will know better than to start smoking.

We have learned that there are programs that work. Study after study have proven that anti-smoking education campaigns significantly reduce tobacco use among kids. Community-based programs, public education, school-based programs, assistance for smokers who want to quit, enforcement of youth access laws are all important components of an anti-smoking campaign. But most importantly, we must get to the children before they start smoking. We need to work to see that all students, like Cynthia Plascencia, know that it is just not worth it to start smoking.

Cynthia is an example of the culture we must create in our children, where it is not cool to smoke. Because kids see friends, family, and movie stars smoking, they think it is a way to gain social acceptance. If that myth disappears, kids will be less tempted to start smoking.

Everyone must realize that smoking is like crack or heroin, it is addictive and it will take a person's life at a much earlier age.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is the Great American Smokeout. Millions of Americans will stop smoking for the day. Let us hope that they take it a step further and give up smoking for life.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS ASSOCIATED WITH SEPTEMBER 11 EVENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have often risen to this floor

over the last couple of weeks and spoken about the unfinished business of this House, and I again rise to my feet.

Let me, first of all, make a very brief comment about airline security. We had a deal, Mr. Speaker. We had a bill passed by 101 in the other body. We had the opportunity in this House to likewise pass that bill and immediately place it on the President's desk. The Republican majority chose not to do that, causing a conference and causing delay.

In the course of that delay, an individual went into O'Hare Airport with seven knives, a stun gun, and pepper spray. Now, I have legislation that I will be offering that criminalizes the carrying of knives and instruments of danger on airplanes, but I would much rather be passing a comprehensive airline security bill, and I hope we will do that.

I offer that in the spirit of bipartisanship and I offer that in the spirit of the voice of the American people. I have heard their voices, and I think their voices sing the same refrain: Help us protect ourselves and help us protect those who travel the airlines of America and around the world.

I also feel compelled to come to this floor to acknowledge the needs of two young women, Dayna Curry, who celebrated her birthday while incarcerated in an Afghanistan jail, and Heather Mercer, 24, both of them from the State of Texas. Let me thank their Congressperson, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS), for his untiring efforts on their behalf.

I rise today as a mother, as the Chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, as a woman, to ask whether or not these young ladies have been forgotten along with the other detainees. We now find out that with the Taliban they have been absconded off to the southern part of Afghanistan. We do not know where they are. We are told by Afghanistan detention center guards that they were nice young women; that they were taken away in the dark of night; that we do not know where they are. We believe they may be going off to a southern city.

We understand the conditions they were living in were none to be proud of. There was no four star and five star hotel. We understand that they tried to stay positive by singing songs and praying. We understand that they do not separate from each other. They are two Americans, I think there is a total of eight, and they are united.

We also understand that family members have not been able to talk with them; that they have not been able to meet with outside officials since their lawyers' last visit in late October. Who amongst us, Mr. Speaker, would tolerate that here in the United States or accept that?

These young women cannot be forgotten. And even though there may be some inner workings, some negotiation, I think the voice of the United States should be strong: We want our

hostages returned. We want these young women returned. These young women were not violating any laws other than merciful efforts to help people to have a better life.

The Taliban should be challenged. Yes, they may be running away, the Northern Alliance may be victorious, they may be in Kabul, but we must stand up for these young women. I am looking to the State Department to begin to ask the hard questions about these young women, and I want to join with my colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS), to demand for their release, but also for a voice of the United States, the kind of voice we had with the hostages in Iran.

Let us have a voice as we parallel to fight terrorism and to fight against the Taliban. Have them give our people back and let our voices be loud.

Mr. Speaker, let me briefly thank the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS) for what she has been doing in acknowledging those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001. As I begin to call their names, and I may not be able to conclude it, but I want to call their names and ask apologies of their families if I mispronounce them:

Harold Lizcano, Martin Lizzul, George Llanes, Elizabeth Claire "Beth" Logler, Catherine Lisa LoGuidice, Jerome Lohez, Michael Lomax, Stephen V. Long, Laura M. Longing, Salvatore Lopes, David Lopez, Maclovio "Joe" Lopez, George Lopez, Manuel "Manny" L. Lopez, Leobarbo Lopez, Daniel Lopez, Israel P. Lopez, Luis M. Lopez, Chet Louie, Stuart Seid Louis, Joseph Lovero, Sara Low, Michael W. Lowe, Garry Lozier, John Peter Lozowsky, Charles Peter Lucania, Edward "Ted" Hobbs Luckett, II, Mark G. Ludvigsen, Lee Charles Ludwig, Sean Thomas Lugano, Daniel Lugo, Jin Lui, Marie Lukas, William Lum, Jr., Michael P. Lunden, Christopher Lunder, Anthony Luparello, Gary Lutnick, Linda Luzzicone, Alexander Lygin, CeeCee Lyles, and Lyn Corea Gray.

They are all people. They lost their lives on September 11, 2001. It is the challenge of this House to pay tribute to them in the works we do and also to bring our hostages home.

TRIBUTE TO BENNY H. POTTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATSON of California. Mr. Speaker, Veterans Day, a few days ago, was very significant to someone in my district. I want to pay tribute to Benny H. Potter, a resident of the West Adams community in Los Angeles. He lived there for a decade, and was a veteran of the Second World War. He passed away recently. He was greatly loved and respected by all in the community who knew him.